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3 June 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Analysis Branch

SUBJECT : Impressions of the Intellofax System by a Member of the Composite Group.

A. Types of Machine Runs Made.

Machine runs seem to fall in the following major categories.

1. To gather material preparatory to writing an NIS Chapter. Up to 70% of the outside runs, and 10% of the inside runs fall in this category.
2. To fill gaps in analyst's files and file updating.
3. To find information in answer to a specific spot problem on which the analyst is unable to find the information in his file so he comes to the Intellofax System as a last resort. This type of run has in general been successful for finding specific reports or political data. It has not been successful in turning up economic data, perhaps because the information is unavailable.
4. To gather information preparatory to writing a study other than an NIS. This quite often concerns a subject on which there is good information available but on which the analyst has not kept files. Recent examples include registration of aircraft and all bloc treaties with non-bloc countries.
5. Standard weekly runs are made by offices to supplement a continuing interest in a specific subject which cannot be satisfied through normal dissemination channels or as a double check against dissemination.

B. Use Made of the System

The Intellofax System is usually thought to be underused. (8-10 machine runs per day) There is some justification for this assertion, but the following should be considered.

1. Intelligence analysts receive thorough dissemination through normal distribution channels. They can answer spot questions by referring to their own files. When a question cannot be answered through their personal files they prefer in most cases to consult other analysts who have collated files rather than use the Intellofax System.

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2. The Intellofax System is more applicable to the research study than to the spot question. It is relatively slow and it does not give summary answers.
3. Some of the most valuable material on denied areas, i.e., Reports and Summaries, is not indexed in the Intellofax System. This writer knows several top analysts on the China area who do not use the Intellofax System because most of the raw intelligence reporting is useless to them.
4. A recent survey indicated general satisfaction with the system. In addition there is a high rate of return by the same users.

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C. Coding and Reference Problems.

1. There is need for more specificity in concrete subjects, e.g., commodities. It is undesirable to screen for specific items buried in a class category. A good example of this is a recent run for Caesium which falls in the general heading "Miscellaneous Non-Ferrous Metals." The revised ISC is more explicit than the present ISC, but there is need to go further.

The ISC is not entirely adequate for abstract subjects, e.g., politics and sociology, but it would be impossible and undesirable to try to construct a classification scheme to handle the variety and complexity of questions posed in these fields. Oddly, the Intellofax System has had its greatest success in answering abstract questions.

2. A high percentage of the Intellofax requests specify comprehensive rather than fragmentary reporting. Some steps have been taken in this direction, e.g., a special punch for finished intelligence, but there is need to go beyond the obvious distinction.
3. The specificity of clear text as used in SR and Minicard systems is a necessity; particularly for geographic location, political organizations, equipment types, and subject extension. This writer feels that a classification system with the use of clear text and controlled faceting devices such as the subject modifier has the advantages of reliability and flexibility not offered by any other indexing system.

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4. The ISC cannot as presently designed adequately handle biographic data. Yet, requests for biographic information are continually made even though the requester has been referred to the USIB biographic facilities. Rather than give admittedly poor biographic service the Intellofax System should be improved in this field or the service should be discontinued.
5. It is understood that preparing book tapes for outside offices is a time consuming task. Many outside requesters appear to ask for book tapes as a matter of habit rather than for an actual need. It would seem that outside requesters could use their own book resources rather than depend on CIA, especially since the books on indefinite loan are not generally available anyway.

D. Conclusion

For what it tries to do, the Intellofax System is doing a good job. As I and others have stated many times there is need for greater input accuracy obtainable through more review, subject specialization and the adoption of the revised ISC. The adoption of the above measures will increase reliability in the system but based on how the system is used it is doubted that it will greatly increase the use made of it. Increased use of the system will probably come only when all of the sources considered important to the analysts are included, the more worthless material is removed, and the system can offer data processing techniques as envisioned in Minicard but more probably in systems more sophisticated than Minicard.

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